



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

May 17, 2005

The Honorable Board of Directors
Los Angeles County
Regional Park and Open Space District
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Directors:

**ALLOCATE FIRST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT
CITIES EXCESS FUNDS TO THE CITY OF EL MONTE,
COUNTY EXCESS FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION,
AND AUTHORIZE AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF EXCESS FUNDS GRANTS
(FIRST DISTRICT - 3 - VOTE MATTER)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Find that the proposed projects are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) according to the Sections of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines adopted by your Board on November 17, 1987, cited herein.
2. Allocate First Supervisorial District Cities Excess Funds in the amount of \$200,000 to the City of El Monte for the development of Gibson Neighborhood Park.
3. Allocate First Supervisorial District County Excess Funds to the Department of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$25,000 to develop a four-acre organic urban farm at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area.
4. Authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to award grants to the City of El Monte and to Community Partners on behalf of EarthWorks Enterprises when applicable conditions have been met and to administer the grants as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified and Per Parcel Projects.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Approval of the second recommendation will allocate \$200,000 in Cities Excess Funds to the City of El Monte towards the development of a new community park on a newly acquired 4.3 acre parcel of land. The Gibson Neighborhood Park Development Project will include native trees and vegetation, restrooms, basketball courts, a play area, benches, barbeques and picnic area, a walking/jogging path, an outdoor classroom platform, and habitat for native species. Total cost for the project, including the \$200,000 above, is \$2,800,000. Additional funding for the project includes State and Federal grant funds and City of El Monte Quimby funds.

The Department of Parks and Recreation, which is a designated recipient of County Excess Funds, will assign the right to apply for \$25,000 of the funds to Community Partners, a nonprofit organization for the benefit of EarthWorks Enterprises to develop a four-acre organic urban farm at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area in South El Monte. EarthWorks Enterprises will develop and operate the farm. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, owner of the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, has approved this activity.

Once established and then on an ongoing basis, the urban farm will be a beautification project that enhances the environment by providing a balanced eco-system showcasing native plants as well as fruits and vegetables. The balanced planting will attract wild birds and beneficial insects. The farm will offer at-risk high school youth, low-income families and other area residents the opportunity to learn organic sustainable agriculture. The total upstart cost of the project, including the \$25,000 for development of the site, is \$228,542. The additional funds include a grant from the California Endowment and other private sector donations.

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 encumber all such funds prior to receiving grants of Excess Funds.

Finally, it is recommended that the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to award the grants to the City of El Monte and Community Partners, when applicable conditions have been met, such as grantee qualifications and consistency between the projects and requirements of the 1996 Proposition, and to administer the grants under procedures previously approved by your Board.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed recommendations further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goal No. 1 (Service Excellence), Goal No. 4 (Fiscal Responsibility) and Goal No. 5 (Children and Families' Well-being) by allocating Excess Funds for enhanced recreational and environmental education opportunities in the El Monte and South El Monte area of the First Supervisorial District.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grants in the amount of \$225,000 is budgeted in the First Supervisorial District portion of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6.

Funds for the grants are available from the First Supervisorial District's portion of the Regional Park and Open Space District allocations of Excess Funds for Fiscal Year 2004-05.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition provides a method for determining each fiscal year the amount of funds available in the following fiscal year to fund capital improvement projects in addition to the amounts specifically identified for projects in the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996. The recommended grants would be funded from the Excess Funds available to the First Supervisorial District from Excess Funds available for cities and for the County.

The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. The Director of Parks and Recreation would be authorized to award grants when all applicable conditions have been met. Any funds allocated by the Board, but not encumbered by award of a grant contract in the same fiscal year, shall be available for allocation by the Board in the following fiscal year.

Your Board approved a Procedural Guide on June 17, 1997, to govern the administration of Regional Park and Open Space District grants for Specified and Per Parcel projects. This Procedural Guide would appropriately govern the administration of the recommended additional grants as well.

County Counsel has reviewed these actions as to form.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

Grant Project Agreements will be entered into and administered under authority delegated to the Director of Parks and Recreation and pursuant to the Procedural Guide approved by the Board in 1997. The Project Agreements will be approved as to form by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended projects will provide additional recreational and environmental education opportunities in the El Monte and South El Monte areas in the First Supervisorial District.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed Gibson Park project is categorically exempt from CEQA according to Sections 15303 (d) (e) and 15304 (a) (b) of the State CEQA guidelines and Classes 3 (a) (b) and 4 (a) (c) of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines adopted by your Board on November 17, 1987, because the project provides for installation of accessory facilities, utility extensions and minor alterations to land including new landscaping and fine grading on a publicly-owned facility.

Whittier Narrows Recreation Area (WNRA) is a federal facility under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and is operated and maintained by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. As a federal facility, all projects at WNRA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The ACOE has determined that the project is in compliance with NEPA as Categorical Exclusion in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.4 and 33d CFR 230.9 and that the project when considered individually and cumulatively does not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment.

The proposed four-acre organic urban farm at WNRA is categorically exempt from CEQA according to Sections 15303 (d) and 15304 (a) (b) of the State CEQA guidelines and Classes 3 (a) and 4 (a) (c) of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines adopted by your Board on November 17, 1987, because the project provides for installation of accessory facilities and minor alterations to land including fine grading, soil preparation and new landscaping on a publicly-owned facility.

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CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one conformed copy of this action to the Chief Administrative Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Russ Guiney".

Russ Guiney
Director, Parks and Recreation

- c: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors (22)
County Counsel